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Human Rights Council

Twenty-eighth session

Agenda items 2 and 3

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development****Note verbale dated 13 March 2015 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Singapore to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland addressed to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Singapore to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations in Switzerland presents its compliments to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council, and has the honour to refer to the attached joint statement, which was delivered on 4 March 2015 at the biennial high-level panel discussion on the question of the death penalty, at the twenty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council (see annex).

The Mission has the further honour to request on behalf of the permanent missions of Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen that the joint statement* be circulated as a document of the twenty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council under agenda items 2 and 3.

* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

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Annex

[English only]

Joint statement at the biennial high-level panel discussion on the question of the death penalty on 4 March 2015, at the twenty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council

Mr President

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of a group of 25 countries.

Any constructive dialogue must be based on mutual respect and an acknowledgement of different viewpoints. Yet, we find ourselves here again today engaging not in dialogue, but speaking across each other.

For many countries, the death penalty remains an important component of their criminal justice system and an important deterrent against what they rightly regard as the most serious crimes for their respective societies, be it terrorism, drug offences, or violent crimes.

The rights of the offender must always be weighed against the rights of the victims, their families and the broader rights of their community to live in peace and security. The State has a responsibility to protect the lives of its innocent citizens while ensuring that justice is rendered to the victims and their families. The death penalty is only applied after adhering to the full due process of law, pursuant to a final judgment rendered by a competent court, and with the right to seek pardon or appeal for commutation.

There is no international consensus for or against the death penalty imposed according to the due process of the law. This has repeatedly been affirmed by the votes on past UNGA resolutions on the death penalty, most recently in the 69th session. Key international instruments that apply to countries with wide divergence in cultures and values also do not proscribe and/or prohibit the use of death penalty.

The UN Charter clearly stipulates that nothing in its Charter shall authorise the UN to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State. In this regard, in line with the UN Charter, no State shall intervene in such matters of other States.

Every State thus has the inalienable sovereign right to choose its legal and criminal justice systems, without interference by other States. Accordingly, the question of whether to retain or abolish the death penalty and the types of crimes for which the death penalty is applied should be determined by each State and the public they protect, taking into account their unique circumstances and threats to their societies.

Thank you, Mr President.

List of co-sponsors

1. Kingdom of Bahrain
2. People's Republic of Bangladesh
3. Barbados
4. Brunei Darussalam

5. People's Republic of China
 6. Democratic People's Republic of Korea
 7. Arab Republic of Egypt
 8. India
 9. Republic of Indonesia
 10. Islamic Republic of Iran
 11. State of Kuwait
 12. Lao People's Democratic Republic
 13. Malaysia
 14. Republic of the Union of Myanmar
 15. Sultanate of Oman
 16. Islamic Republic of Pakistan
 17. State of Qatar
 18. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
 19. Republic of Singapore
 20. Republic of the Sudan
 21. Syrian Arab Republic
 22. Republic of Uganda
 23. United Arab Emirates
 24. Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
 25. Republic of Yemen
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